President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children: Chemical Exposures

Purpose

The purpose of the Chemical Exposures Subcommittee is to coordinate federal research and action to address early-life exposures to chemicals that impact children's health. Children are not just "little adults." Many factors, such as unique behaviors; breathing, eating, and drinking more relative to their weight; and their still developing bodies may increase the susceptibility of children to negative health effects from exposure to toxic chemicals.

The goals of this subcommittee include:

- Enhance coordination of federal research planning and application
  - Generate and disseminate information on existing chemical exposures for interested and affected groups.
  - Enhance alignment on messaging and activities related to chemical exposures.
  - Coordinate the development of methods and models to enhance exposure assessment relevant to public health.
- Lead federal discussions on critical topics, including
  - Priority issues related to children's chemical exposures.
  - Federal initiatives, such as the Food and Drug Adminstration Closer to Zero and the National Institutes of Health Human Health Exposure Analysis Resource: National Exposure Assessment Laboratory Network.
  - Emerging areas of interest and research, such as endocrine disruptors and other contaminants of emerging concern.
- Leverage Task Force expertise to solve problems
  - Partner with clinicians and communities to address specific chemical exposures, including the Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units.
  - Promote programs that encourage sustainable chemicals management, voluntary programs that promote the use of products containing low toxicity/non-toxic chemicals, and integrated pest management programs that help promote the safe use of chemicals in settings where children are present.
  - Coordinate commitments to action from agencies across the federal family.

Activities

The chemical exposures subcommittee is enhancing alignment among federal agencies on messaging, activities, and communication related to children's health impacts of chemical exposures. The subcommittee also fosters interagency information sharing, coordination, and collaboration that enhances children's health policy efforts.

Accomplishments

Convening Around Chemicals and Children

- Established subgroups within the Chemical Exposures Subcommittee aligned with the Purposes and Activities.
- Presented on the purpose, activities, and resources of the Chemical Exposures Subcommittee at conferences and workshops including:
  - American Public Health Association Chemicals and Health Group Meeting
  - American Neuropsychiatric Association Annual Meeting
  - NIEHS Partnerships in Environmental Public Health Workshop
  - USA Exposome 2024 Symposium

Cross-Agency Data and Biospecimen Resources Identification Activity

The Subcommittee identified a list of federal agency data and biospecimen resources that could provide for potential additional measurements of children's chemical exposures. Although the list was for internal government use, the realization that there was no central record of government-supported data and biobanks helped lead to the creation of the Children's Health Exposure Analysis Resource (CHEAR), which was funded from 2015-2019. The goal of CHEAR was to provide tools and laboratory analyses so researchers can assess the full range of environmental exposures that may affect children's health. In 2019, CHEAR expanded beyond children's health and became the Human Health Exposure Analysis Resource (HHEAR).